

Party Realignment

I. Realignment

A. occur on the average of about every 30 years to 40 years

B. tend to occur at the time of major crises when “politics as usual” is not adequate to deal with major economic or social problems;

1. the racial and sectional tensions of the 1850s
2. the depressions of the 1890s and 1930s

II. The result of major crises

A. highly polarized campaigns;

B. heightened public interest- broad increase in voter turnout

C. third party protests occurred before each realignment and reflected the inability of the existing major parties to meet the expectations of large segments of society

1. Anti-Mason party in the northeastern states preceded the emergence of the second Party System;
2. Free Soil party arose prior to the collapse of the Second Party System and the rise of the Republicans;
3. Populist uprising in 1892 took place before the McKinley-Bryan realigning election of 1896
4. LaFollette Progressive party of 1924 foreshadowed the problems that were to result in the New Deal realignment of 1932 that resulted in *critical realignments* of voters

III. During a realignment , significant changes within the electorate:

A. minority party becomes the majority party (1860, 1932);

B. one party achieves an infusion of strength that enables it to remain dominant (1896)

C. changes in the partisan loyalties of voters develop (1860, 1932)

IV. Stages of Realignment

A. voter dissatisfaction with the dominant political party;

B. new party governs successfully

C. change in voter attitudes toward political parties

American Party Systems

	Dominant Party	Opposition Party	Policy Consensus
1787-1800	Federalist	Anti-Federalist	American Nationalism
1800-1828	Jeffersonian	none	American Nationalism
1828-1860	Democratic	Whigs	Expansion of Democracy
1860-1896	Republicans	Democrats	Slavery/Union/National Power
1896-1932	Republican	Democrats	Industrialization
1932- ?	Democratic	Republican	Nationalization of Economy

V. 1964? 1972? 1984? 1994? 2008?

- a. **Huge Electoral Victory for the President (except 1994- Midterm Election)**
- b. **No change in control of House or Senate (Senate in 1986 transfers to Republicans and seesaws back and forth until 1994), Therefore not an overwhelming movement of the populace**
- c. **Issues?**
 - i. **1964 War on Poverty- National Consensus?**
 - ii. **1972 Nixon's Silent Majority**
 - iii. **1984 Reagan's Downsizing of Government- South becomes more Republican- Christian Conservative Movement (Moral Majority) becomes tied to Republican Party**
 - iv. **1994 Contract For America- South becomes Solidly Republican, Clinton wins 1996 election, not a broad shift**
 - v. **2008 First African American- NE solidly Democratic-Rocky Mountain States lean Democratic, carry House/Senate—2010 elections- forecast strong Dem losses.????**
- d. **Significan 3rd Parties**
 - i. **1968 George Wallace**
 - ii. **1980 John Anderson**
 - iii. **1992 Ross Perot and the Reform Party**